

# Making Assessment Plan Reviews Less Threatening and More Useful

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## WSU's Assessment Plan Review Process

- ▶ Annual [rubric-based](#) review of 10% of assessment plans
  - ▶ First review in summer 2015
- ▶ University Assessment Council members and other volunteers
- ▶ Training, norming, scoring
- ▶ Post-review meeting
  - ▶ Program representative(s)
  - ▶ University Assessment Council representative
  - ▶ Director of Assessment
- ▶ 35 reviews completed in 2019 – an enormous time commitment



## Logistics of Review Meetings

- ▶ Administrative assistant sends a form email to all parties to schedule meetings
- ▶ Some University Assessment Council members add a friendly message
- ▶ 30 minutes to
  - ▶ Explain the review process and goals
  - ▶ Discuss reviewers' scores and comments
  - ▶ Share updates
  - ▶ Answer questions and offer support
  - ▶ Congratulate and thank program representatives for their work



## Goals

- ▶ **Improve assessment practices across campus**
- ▶ **Offer support to programs**
- ▶ Recognize individuals for their assessment efforts
- ▶ Collect data to inform University Assessment Council and Director of Assessment activities
- ▶ Provide evidence of good assessment practices to the Higher Learning Commission

## Goals Achieved?

- ▶ Clear documentation available for recognition and use of evidence for Council Planning and HLC reporting
- ▶ BUT: No evidence collected for whether the meetings are useful for improving assessment practices or supporting programs.



**Post-review meeting interviews proposed**

## Method



- ▶ Phone interviews conducted
- ▶ Contacted 15 participants from the 2016-17 and 2017-18 review cohorts by email
- ▶ Follow up email if didn't respond.
- ▶ Scheduled and completed 8 interviews (53% response rate)

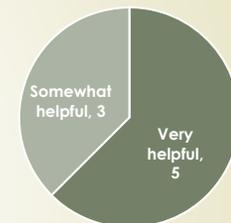
## Post-Review Meeting Interview Questions

- Initial communication
  - How learned about it
  - Reactions to communication
  - Suggestions for improving communication
- Review Process
  - How useful review was and why
  - How useful having someone walked through it was
- Impact on Assessment Plans
  - Changes made
  - Barriers to change
- Recommendations
  - Recommended changes to process of feedback
  - Recommendations for assessment overall at Wayne State University



## Results: Improve Assessment Practices

- Five out of eight respondents said the meeting was very helpful.
  - Feedback was very specific
  - Clarification of terms
  - Useful to have outsider's view
  - Opportunity to ask questions
  - Helpful to have someone to walk through the review rather than just reading the report



*"Did not change what we were doing for assessment, rather, how reporting it."*

## Actual Assessment Plan changes

- It was challenging to get respondents to be specific about changes. It is unclear if they didn't change anything or if they were unable to articulate it on the spot.
- One respondent talked about improving student learning outcomes.
- Another respondent talked about an increased focus on their program

*"We also looked at the learning outcomes and tweaked them to be clearer... and then based our assessment on those edited learning outcomes"*

*"Where it counts, it has helped... the actual ways we are watching what happens in our program"*

## Results: Support

- Respondents consistently reported feeling supported by the process and the way it was implemented.
- Respondents appreciated the tools that were provided.
- The personal meeting was important to many respondents

*"It was done in a non-threatening spirit... assessment is for improving the process and doing what's best for our students."*

*"Very helpful because it gave me a guide as to what I should be working towards. Before I had no idea – I was like a blank slate. It gave me a great pattern to follow."*

*"It is hard when you are looking at a packet of information... to have someone sit down with you to go through it, the prompts were helpful, and I like the one-on-one attention."*



## Results: Other

- ▶ Frustration with the time it takes to do assessment
- ▶ Questions about how to fit programs' assessment practices into the documentation system effectively. Are there non-numeric ways to assess?



## Interpretation and Action Plan

- ▶ Overall appreciation for the personal attention and support and for the non-punitive approach
- ▶ Time commitment from Assessment office is likely worthwhile
- ▶ Continue to hold post-review meetings
- ▶ Raise general awareness of the reviews and review process
- ▶ Communicate more information in advance
- ▶ Explore alternative methods to assess changes in assessment plan quality.



## Your Turn!

- ▶ If you have a similar feedback process, what works well about it?
- ▶ How does your feedback process differ from ours?
- ▶ What changes or responses to our process would you recommend?